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Castro's new revolution

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Cuba's macho maximum leader, Fidel Castro, has done what many of his ardent supporters would have thought unthinkable. The leftist guerrilla chief who came out of the mountains a quarter-century ago with smoking rifle in hand and smoldering cigar in teeth has quit smoking. Castro without a cigar is like George S. Patton without a riding crop, Hitler without a mustache or Winston Churchill without, well, a cigar.

"If someone had forced me to quit, I would have suffered," he said, speaking like a true dictator. His swearing off likely is permanent, because he ordered himself to do it. If, however, he acts like the typical new nonsmoker and tries too zealously to convert all his fellow

Cubans to his healthy discipline, his revolution may be put to an interesting test.

The news may or may not come as a relief to the CIA's special projects section, which some years ago plotted to do Mr. Castro in with an exploding cigar. It also had been trying to work up a chemical substance that would eliminate Mr. Castro's luxuriant beard in hopes that he might look like a wimp without it and lose face with his macho followers. Mr. Castro says he intends to keep his beard even though it no longer will be adorned with a cigar dangling above it. He says the shaving time would cut into his reading. Members of the CIA depilatory lab can rejoice that at least their jobs are safe.